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Communicative grammar: towards a linguistic model of interpretive activity*

1. Intro

In searching for a rationale validating their methodological choices, linguists often appeal to a distinctive "passkey" – the "linguistic point of view". And, alas, there is hardly any agreement between various linguistic parties as to who could be the privileged one to decide where this point lies (or, to invoke a self-explanatorial "hedge," where this point "really" lies). In the face of such confusion, resorting to a primary source of linguistic data – the cornerstone of an empirically-oriented linguistic framework – might constitute a relatively non-controversial means of escaping the pitfalls of an idle, methodological tug-of-war. Simultaneously, it might also permit taking into consideration some vital aspects of human communication often disregarded in contemporary linguistic approaches.

As we see it, this primitive source of linguistic data (and by no means the data itself) is a concrete, individual, communicating agent – one who speaks, interprets utterances, and communicates with his interlocutor(s) in the concrete communicative environment. This way of putting it calls attention to the fact that human linguistic activity is, by its very nature, a behavioral phenomenon, and that language itself, being primarily a form of social behavior, should not be treated as separate from other kinds of human communicative activity. Stating this self-evident truth, we would like to indicate consequences of an Archimedean point of linguistic reasoning.

Certainly, the number of those who think language exists primarily as an autonomous semiotic system, or those who would be willing to argue the ontological status of such a semiotic object, is legion. Still, very few contemporary linguists would seri-

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ously dismiss thinking about language in terms of social behavior as illegitimate or unsound. Existing controversies regarding the nature of linguistic phenomena clearly show that theoretical representations of "linguistic facts" should be interpreted seriously, albeit definitely not literally. What it means practically is that the value of a particular linguistic theory, framework, and model should be evaluated in its relation to human communicative (inter)activity.

Thus, objects in the "communicative environment" that are to be identified for linguistic investigation can be given as *agents* in their (inter)communicative activity, the linguistic products of this activity – *utterances*, and *situations* (their pragmatic settings included), within which this verbal and nonverbal (inter)activity emerges. Delineating the research area this way, we are naturally trying to stick to the basic tenets of empirical linguistics.

Significantly enough, in the course of the history of linguistic thinking, these three incommensurable realms of linguistic communication (agents, utterances, and situations) have continually emerged as elements of various linguistic approaches. These approaches testify to the constitutive value of human, overall meaningful, and interpretive behavior in concrete acts of communication, solving the "problem of language". It seems that solely in relation to this kind of action can one understand cognitive and linguistic (inter)activity of communicating agents, and recognize the products of this activity – meaningful phenomena with their perceivable communicative counterparts – as linguistically relevant facts.

As is evident, we make no pretense at neutrality here. Nevertheless, rather than trying to promote a particular linguistic theory at the outset, we would like to pose and very briefly discuss several metalinguistic (or even, *horribile dictu*, philosophical) ideas, which have led our thinking to the position which we presently take. They may appear somewhat controversial, so we will refer to the source text to allow the author of the ideas being introduced to speak for himself.

2. The Openness and Groundlessness of Linguistic Phenomena and Wittgenstein's Perspective

According to Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the ultimate justification or ultimate foundation of our language and our linguistic activity is simply our everyday *practice* – what we commonly *do* when speaking, interpreting, and understanding linguistic signs that emerge in concrete acts of communication. And this practice itself appears to be a terminal point to which we may appeal in our quest for the foundation of linguistic behavior. Thus, language, by its very essence, introduces itself as a symbolic activity that *constitutes* (and not only *reflects*) our everyday practice – simply one of our primordial givens that cannot be explained, justified or grounded. "Life forms," in which the linguistic activity of communicating agents is deeply rooted, function as a kind of paradigm that determine which people's actions are significant or meaningful and which are not. There are, ultimately, no other conditions by which means we could question or approve them. Thus, language and its grammar, as seen from this perspective, do not constitute norms of significancy but rather substantiate standards and rules

that organize the linguistic practice of a particular community into coherent, meaningful behavior.

From the point of view adopted here, the most important thread within the previously invoked sequence of Wittgenstein's thinking is a set of his findings concerning the very status of grammatical rules. According to him, the scope of influence that grammatical rules seems to "exert" upon the speaking agents does not seem to be determined by their properties, but rather by the way in which those rules are interpreted by their followers. In other words, there is no direct causal relationship between grammatical rules themselves and the linguistic activity of communicating agents. There is also no causal or deterministic relationship of any kind between these two groups of objects of various ontological status. Quite the opposite, it is communicative agents who decide to follow the dictate of rules or to dismiss them as useless. If it so happens that agents act in a way that could be interpreted as conforming to the dictate of some particular rule, it definitely happens because of their own decision to let themselves be "guided" by this particular rule. Therefore, it appears, there is nothing inherent in the very nature of the rules about which we are speaking – even those reflecting logical or mathematical necessity – that could absolutely and irrevocably force agents to follow them. This "voluntarist" or (a/anti)nomist momentum is clearly connected with the problematic question of the relationship between meaning, interpretation, and understanding along with their influence (or lack thereof) on the very practice of employing these rules. Relevant passages of *Philosophical Investigations* explain:

> But how can a rule show me what I have to do at *this* point? Whatever I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule." – That is not what we ought to say, but rather: any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning (Wittgenstein 1958: § 198).
>
> This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, than it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.
>
> It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual case.
>
> Hence there is an inclination to say: every action according to the rule is an interpretation. But we ought to restrict the term "interpretation" to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another (Wittgenstein 1958: § 201).
>
> And hence also "obeying a rule" is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule "privately": otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it (Wittgenstein 1958: § 202).

> Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way. But what if one person reacts in one way and another in another to the order and the training? Which one is right? [...] The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language (Wittgenstein 1958: § 206).
> The rule, once stamped with a particular meaning, traces the lines along which it is to be followed through the whole of space. – But if something of this sort really were the case, how would it help?
> No; my description only made sense if it was to be understood symbolically. – I should have said: *This is how it strikes me.*
> When I obey a rule, I do not choose.
> I obey the rule blindly (Wittgenstein 1958: § 219).
> The rule can only seem to me to produce all its consequences in advance if I draw them as a *matter of course* (Wittgenstein 1958: § 238).

As is thus made evident, acting and communicating agents may easily misunderstand the "gist" of the rules they follow; they may even interpret them incorrectly or obey them "blindly", and then, despite that fact, proceed according to the expectations of their interlocutors. Nothing in the "nature" of these rules – and Wittgenstein's cases make this explicit – enforces any "proper" or even particular way of conforming to them. Moreover, nothing forces them to conform to these rules at all. Everything depends on the decisions of the agents themselves. Still, if any justification of abidance by the rules (or their rationale) must be sought, the only answer could be other rules or the very fact that this particular way of acting is simply a *matter of course*.

> "How am I able to obey a rule", asks Wittgenstein, and comments, "if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do. If I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do' (Wittgenstein 1958: § 218).

Seeing the problem of human linguistic activity from this perspective it could be stated that it is the grammar itself which justifies the way people speak, because of its normativity. And it is norms that have the power of justifying any culturally standardized behavior, which speaking no doubt is. But grammar itself standardizes that part of linguistic behavior which people exercise most often wherever these standards embody the very rules of correctness. Thus, any attempt to explain meaningful linguistic phenomena that tries to go beyond them, towards some unfathomable instances that were to "justify" or "validate" them (these being "coded rules", "deep structures of sense", or other objects "rooted in" socially constructed reality), are bound to fail. True, the last instance to which one can appeal in this inquiry is the non-justified and non-grounded linguistic and interactive activity of communicating agents, but the study of this domain cannot yield any "explanations" for the above-mentioned phenomena. "Explanations" of that kind cannot be found in a realm where the indeterminacy of linguistic signs goes hand in hand with the very lack of a causal determination be-

tween the rules of manipulating signs and the sovereignty of (inter)reacting agents in their decisions concerning the way of keeping those rules. "And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations", warns Wittgenstein. Then, he explains the gist of the proposed method:

> We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems. These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in despite of* an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known (Wittgenstein 1958: § 109).

And he ascertains the key flaw inherent in linguistic procedures aimed at (re)constructing the grammar of language that makes their models misrepresent the linguistic activity of communicating agents:

> A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not *command a clear view* of the use of our words. – Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in "seeing connections". Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases.*
> The concept of a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things (Wittgenstein 1958: § 122).

Following Wittgenstein's suggestions regarding arranging and rearranging "what we have always known" (i. e., the uses of linguistic expressions) in such a way that can reveal previously unnoticed interconnections between investigated elements, we "want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; one out of many possible orders; not *the* order" (Wittgenstein 1958: § 132). Consequently, putting forward the model of communicative grammar, we are well aware of the deep truth in Roy Harris' succinct phrase stating that "there are no rules of grammar: there are only grammarians' rules" (Harris 1990: 74). And, because we treat communication not as a purpose of language, but rather its attribute (cf. Hymes 1992: 39), the most important result of our survey should be disclosure of this intrinsic, communicative aspect of the linguistic phenomena.

Thus, the framework upon which we are working is meant not as one more tentative (re)construction of the grammatical system of a language, but rather as a model accounting for the overall linguistic and cognitive activity that agents commonly perform in concrete acts of speaking. Seen from this perspective, our first task is to identify the previously mentioned intermediate cases that link particular components of agents' *communicative competence* (which have been ruled out or scattered over different modules of *linguistic* competence in previous linguistic theories), and to incorporate them into the larger, above-mentioned framework.

The methodological perspective we have adopted, however, is, like Wittgenstein's, a *phenomenalistic* one. One of the most important consequences of taking it on means that we are not trying to pin down the "essence" of linguistic phenomena by "grounding" them, "explaining," or relating them to any prerequisites that are to be discovered by means of deciphering or interpretive techniques. On the contrary, one of the many possible orders of linguistic phenomena, not *the* order itself, can only be found by reiterative (re)arranging of cases that we have always known, until the problem for the sake of which we have entered that game is solved. Further, somewhat paradoxically, *dissolving* it would mean that "the essence" for which we have been searching has been found. The very fact that the problem has been solved means that an intrinsic aspect of the investigated case has been found. In that case, "the essence" of a questioned phenomenon would appear to be merely a by-product of the applied procedure – a hypostasis.

In other words, properties of linguistic phenomena, significant from the perspective invoked here, are not hidden. Paraphrasing Wittgenstein, one may say that they "lie in open light", but usually it is "our forms of expressions [that] prevent us in all sorts of ways from seeing that nothing out of the ordinary is involved, by sending us in pursuit of chimeras" (Wittgenstein 1958: § 94). Reiterative rearranging of standard uses of linguistic expressions permits us to survey those aspects of studied cases which would otherwise be untraceable. According to Wittgenstein:

> We feel as if we had to *penetrate* phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the "possibilities" of phenomena. We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the *kind of statement* that we make about phenomena. [...]
> Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language. [...]
> But now it may come to look as if there were something like a final analysis of our forms of language, and so a *single* completely resolved form of every expression. That is, as if our usual forms of expression were, essentially, unanalysed; as if there were something hidden in them that had to be brought to light. When this is done the expression is completely clarified and our problem solved.
> It can also be put like this: we eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact; but now it may look as if we were moving towards a particular state, a state of complete exactness; and as if this were the real goal of our investigation.
> This finds expressions in questions as to the *essence* of language, of propositions, of thought. – For if we too in these investigations are trying to understand the essence of language – its function, its structure, – yet *this* is not what those questions have in view. For they see in the essence, not something that already lies open to view and that becomes surveyable by a rearrangement, but something that lies *beneath* the surface. Something that lies within, which we see when we look *into* the thing, and which an analysis digs out (Wittgenstein 1958: § 90-92).

Thus, it is not an "essence" of any kind, that, being hidden from us, should be revealed and identified. In a language, as we see it, everything already *lies open to view* and becomes surveyable by rearranging what is already known. It is rather one of many possible orders – discernible via the aforementioned procedure – that is to be sought: an order that could account for the linguistic and cognitive activity performed by agents in concrete acts of linguistic communication. Such is one of the main purposes of *Communicative Grammar* – nothing less and nothing more.

3. *Communicative Grammar* – The Gist of the Approach

The kind of order about which we are speaking here can be traced when standard practice of human linguistic communication is taken into account. For those who accept the basic tenets of cognitive linguistics, it is obvious that, in real communicative behavior, grammar (whatever it may be "in and of itself") does not directly interact with text. Rather, it is that things go the way that Talmy Givón has convincingly put it: "the grammar manipulates (or is deployed by) the mind that in turn interprets (or produces) the text" (Givón 1990: 893) – the consequence of which is an obvious methodological move which he proposes: re-interpretation of grammar as mental processing instructions (Givón 1990: 893). From this point of view the text is not entirely the product of a language system, but the result of the creative effort of the speaker. Such creativity is possible only in a situation where rules presumably concern the formal organization of a text, and, concurrently, its very meaning lies in the realm of free interpretation. We essentially see linguistic activity as it unfolds in the concrete act of communication the way this metaphor suggests (for it is a metaphor that should be interpreted seriously, albeit not literally). However, we also conceive linguistic activity along the lines drawn by M. A. K. Halliday (Halliday 1973, 1985). In the early stages of our work we found it useful to treat grammar as mental processing instructions constituting functional modules of a language system – "macrofunctions" or "metafunctions" in Halliday's own words. These "relatively discrete areas of formalized meaning potential" (Halliday 1973: 99) – i.e., the *ideational* or *experiential*, the *interpersonal* (which we prefer to call *interactional*), and the *textual* – deal with the three interwoven aspects of utterances/texts in the concrete act of communication. These are respectively: the *message*, the *exchange*, and the *representation* (Halliday 1985: 32-37.

The ideational/experiential module allows for expressing the agent's individual experience (cf. Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987) of the external world ("projected world," cf. Jackendoff 1983: 28-29), as well as the phenomena of his own consciousness. This module, according to Halliday's framework, comprises the processes, participants, and circumstances of transitivity. From the logical point of view, one can represent the ideational meaning in the form of a proposition which could be subject to a truth/false accounting. The interpersonal/interactional module handles the "grammar of personal participation", that is, the interlocutor's role in the act of communication, his personal commitment to it, and his "doing things with words" *in* saying and *by* saying. From a purely linguistic point of view, this involves "genres of speech", modality, mood (con-

ceived as assessment of probabilities), etc. The textual module deals with the organization of the information flow, the relationships between particular parts of the discourse, and the overall communicative structure. Grammatically, this is primarily accomplished by a thematic-rhematic structure (information focus) and by different means of formal expression (compression, condensation, etc).

The gist of this approach, as we see it, has been succinctly expressed by Halliday himself:

> If we take the grammatical [...] system, this is the system of what the speaker *can say* [...]. What the speaker can say, i.e., the lexicogrammatical system as a whole, operates as the realization of the semantic system, which is what the speaker *can mean* – what I refer to as the "meaning potential" [...]. Now, once we go outside the language, then we see that this semantic system is itself the realization of something beyond, which is what the speaker *can do* – I have referred to that as the "behaviour potential" (Halliday 1978: 39).

Clearly, from a purely linguistic point of view, utterance is a combination of linguistic signs whose structure and meaning is determined by the system of a particular language – a combination which has been actualized in some concrete act of communication. For a linguist then, utterance is, a manifestation of a structure of language. But in real, everyday communication, utterances function first and foremost as instruments of social (inter)action and not as descriptions or manifestations of a reality of some kind or other. Thus, to say something, means, from this point of view, to perform an act towards somebody as regards something – to conclude, assert, deny, request, question, order, warn, promise, offer, apologize, thank, congratulate, declare, etc.

As a result, the sense of an utterance or its function is determined not only by its linguistic structure, but also by the concrete parameters of the communicative environment or pragmatic setting: i.e., by whom, towards whom, where, when, in what context, and to what purpose some words have been uttered.

The self-evidentiality of a need for a linguistic theory for treating utterance as an instrument of social (inter)action can easily be proved even by appealing to the "classic", structuralist stance of thinking about language.

As it is commonly known, the structuralist analysis of a text is aimed at identifying primitive units of a linguistic system and at characterizing their value or function in this structure. It is usually accomplished by two basic analytical operations: segmentation and substitution. As a result linguistic units of four levels are obtained – sentences, morphemes, phonemes, and distinctive features. Units of a higher level are composed of the formative elements of a lower level while being, at the same time, formative elements for units placed at the level above their own.

These integrational (element – whole) relationships determine form and function (sense or value) of each linguistic unit. The form of a particular unit is simply an inventory and the ordering of its formative elements situated on the level of a system lower than the unit in question. Concurrently, sense is the unit's potential for functioning as a formative (or functional) element of a structure placed at a higher lin-

guistic level. Thus, a particular linguistic unit has its form as a structure of units at a level lower, and sense (or value) as an element (or building block) of a unit from a level higher. (So the only elements of language to which the status of linguistic units may be granted are phonemes and morphemes.) The relations between language units of different levels in a real utterance cannot be reduced to a simple sum of the parts. From the communicative perspective, signs do not name things, but only indicate them.

Seen from this point of view, the sentence does not possess any linguistic sense – if one were to understand it as we have just described – since there are no linguistic units larger than the sentence itself at a level higher than the one at which it is situated. There are no units of which a sentence could be a formative or a functional part. From a purely linguistic, systemic point of view, a sentence can only be characterized formally, but not functionally. Even if someone would like to treat a sentence as a functional part of a text, one cannot because text is not an integrated whole in the sense that any linguistic unit is because sentences do not, in turn, constitute a text. They are simply being lined up, one after another, as someone pleases, in the process of the creation of communication.

Consequently, the functional analysis of a sentence does not refer to any paradigmatic or syntagmatic relationship between sentences but to a situation in which and with regard to which something has been said. Hence, to describe a sentence as a formal and functional whole, one has to enter the realm of discourse, and take into account the pragmatic setting of verbal interaction of which a sentence is a part. Ultimately, the sense of a sentence can only be revealed when it is studied as an utterance against the backdrop of a concrete pragmatic setting being established by the linguistic activity of communicating agents.

Pondering questions of this kind, we arrive at the conclusion that models of grammar – within which the agent's linguistic potential is treated as a repertory or inventory of symbolic resources enabling interlocutors to (re/de)construct and interpret the meaning of utterances – should be enriched in such a way that the description of linguistic means would take into account not only the intra-personal aspect of their functioning but the inter-personal as well.

As a result, *Communicative Grammar* essentially represents a *process-oriented* or *procedural* approach to the study of utterances or texts as they emerge in real communication. Consequently, although discernment and investigation of linguistic and cognitive units, structural regularities, and standard procedures is still one of our goals, it is by no means a goal in and of itself. We are primarily concerned with routine operations and the standard cognitive building blocks (understood as "mental prefabricates") which interlocutors utilize when processing texts in real communication. Arguing along the lines adopted by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), we could say that we are treating utterances (texts) and their parts as operational units and patterns that interlocutors employ for signaling meanings and purposes during communication. However, as far as the interactive (or interpersonal) aspect of a communication is concerned, linguistic utterances are not only means for signaling purposes but also for accomplishing them.

4. Operational Modules

The *Communicative Grammar* put forward here to account for the linguistic and interpretational activity of interlocutors in the concrete acts of communication operates on three levels. These are meant to approximately mirror particular stages (if not concrete operations) of processing chunks of information en route from underlying semantic representation ("intended message") to the utterance with its full-fledged communicative value (illocutionary force). Then, reversing this order, communicative grammar moves from ready-made, meaningful text or utterance back to the cognitive and inferential conditions of its appearance in communication – back to the initial element being an "intended message" that one has decided to make known by producing such a structure.

As to the very existence of the intended message, despite all the doubts concerning its ontological status that one might foster, it seems reasonable to posit its preexistence in one form or another in the speaker's mind before engagement in the very act of communication. It is the intended message that determines or constrains the whole process of selecting and combining linguistic expressions into utterances and "genres of speech" performed by a speaker, who, as speech flows, constantly monitors the verbalizing procedure in order to maintain balance between his intention and the ultimate communicative effect.

Although the intended message could be thought of as being outside the act of language, and so, as an object of scholarly analysis, outside the linguist's field of competence, we posit its falling into the scope of linguistic study for several reasons.

One of the most important things is that we can talk of nothing we do not somehow experience. That is to say that the only limitation on what we can talk about is that we must be at least minimally aware of something – what we are talking about must impinge upon our universe of experience – at the moment of speaking. Consequently, notwithstanding some methodological difficulties in this formulation, the intended message should not be excluded from linguistic analysis because it constitutes the immediate extralinguistic referent for what is being uttered. Moreover, the fact that this referent places itself within the mind of a speaker and not outside it (being a part of – to use Lakoff's expression – one's *experiential thought*, and not some physical object) contributes to our view concerning meaningful and intentional phenomena being *(re)constructed* or *inferred* and not *conveyed* or *transmitted*. Every utterance, therefore, has a referent. As the outcome of an act of linguistic communication this refers to that part of a speaker's experience which, being his intended message, functions as the instance in relation to which the very process of "descending" thought into language is being controlled.

Roughly speaking, the model that is being proposed consists of several operational modules: the *paraphrasing module* (which derives standard propositional structures from the pre-languaged intended message and assigns concrete deictic parameters to it – tense, aspect, localization, etc); the *interactional module* that converts such a standard structure into utterance meant as an instrument of social (inter)action (act of speech) in the concrete pragmatic setting; and the *discoursive* (or *textual*) *module* transforming utterance into, e.g., a replica of dialogic interaction (or text), etc.

Approaching this structure from the point of view of cognitive linguistics, wherein grammar is conveniently treated as a repertory of symbolic resources, one may also portray it as a list of *terms* and *operators* being placed on the three levels of grammar mentioned here – that is *ideational, interactional and discoursive* (*textual*). As a result several kinds of groups of standard linguistic units could be obtained:

1. **Lexicon of an ideational level**
   - 1.1 List of ideational terms
   - 1.2. List of operators
     - 1.2.1. List of operators of predication and syntactic connectors (Lexical and grammatical units/morphemes)
     - 1.2.2. List of operators of actualization
       - 1.2.2.1. List of operators and hybrid terms of temporalization
       - 1.2.2.2. List of operators and hybrid terms of aspectualization
       - 1.2.2.3. List of hybrid terms of localization and topographization
2. **Lexicon of an interactional level**
   - 2.1. List of pragmatic operators
     (Functional perspective of a sentence
     Pragmatic functions:
     - informational – stating, questioning, denying, accepting, persuading, etc.;
     - modal – certainty, presumption, uncertainty, exclusion, modal underspecification, etc.;
     - axiological – introducing a scale of value, positioning of elements on the scale, etc.;
     - behavioral – proposing, asking, demanding, ordering, promising, advising, etc.;

     Transparency of a message ("situational hedges"))
3. **Lexicon of a textual (discoursive) level**
   - 3.1. List of ritualizers
   - 3.2. List of operators of indexical terms
   - 3.3. List of operators of dialogization and textual arrangement:
     (Metatextual markers ("announcers")
     "Condensers"/ "economizers")

Before proceeding to the actual presentation of a rationale behind this structure let us briefly review some properties of the proposed elements.

From the perspective of their functioning in the process of contributing meaning and organizing informational flow in a sentence, all the units of communicative grammar can essentially be divided into two groups. The first group is that of *terms*, which we understand (with their logical or "computerese" connotations) as any *informationally* autonomous or self-sufficient linguistic units loaded with *ideational* content – whether morphemes, lexemes or phrases – singled out from a *communicative* point of view. The second group is that of *operators,* which we understand as linguistic units that express relationships between terms, or between "quanta" of information being con-

veyed by the utterance and the elements of particular background setting. This division overlaps the other whose basic criteria reflect the systemic orientation of the grammar considered as an inventory of linguistic resources.

5. General Characteristics of Units of *Communicative Grammar*

Let us begin with the units of the *ideational* level of the model. Elements of this set fall into classes delineated on the basis of a linguistic-systemic categorization. For this purpose we simply adopted standard criteria allowing for recognition of a given unit as representing a particular "part of speech". However, in order to construct a model faithful to what is really going on in concrete acts of communication, we adjusted the received, standard classification by considering the functional role of those units – played in conveying elements of information – the main criterion of our analysis. As a result, linking communicative units with "parts of speech" takes under consideration not their morphosyntactic properties but their semantically and pragmatically determined functions as "conveyers" and "organizers" of information flow in the structure of utterance.

The main methodological novelty of this approach is the assumption that the formal boundaries of the communicative unit do not restrain its semantic (ideational) boundaries. Every term used in an utterance indicates a wider scope of meaning, being only a part of it. This assumption compels us to accept the idea that the individual (autonomous) meaning of a word is possible only on the metalinguistic level when we deal with the abstract semantic construct. In the case of real communication, a word indicates the localization in a certain (one of many) semantic standard and therefore indicates the whole of such a standard.

From this perspective, a verb is considered to be the core of an analytic predicate-argument structure, which connotes nominal elements (names) as its arguments; an adjective is, by the same token, the core of a secondary predicative-argument structure, and it also leaves room for its nominal argument. The adverb is treated as the core of secondary metapredication and leaves room for verbs and adjectives that are its arguments in the structure, and so on. Terms that actualize the meaning of the main predicate (tense, aspect, localization) are placed on a distinct list. These are chiefly lexical units, groups of units and analytical constructions denoting intervals of time and space.

Thus, the basic property of each lexical unit is still its categorical value, i.e., its "profile" as an instantiation of a particular part of speech and its subcategorical value concerning substitutional constraints. Besides, each term of the ideational level must be represented in the proper sublexicon by a set of semantic standards (predicates) representing its "meaning potential" and determining its selective function. This information should also be accompanied by morphological, inflectional, and syntactic information, along with general rules concerning the possibility of combining particular terms with other units in a given semantic setting, and the list of grammatical operators needed for such a derivation. All this data should be strictly correlated with the previously mentioned semantic information to allow for determining a standard and

nonstandard derivational path for each investigated term. In a particular case it would also be useful to attach additional information to the term concerning its idiosyncratic (co)occurrences.

Roughly, the overall structure of an entry concerning properties of a particular term can be rendered as follows:

> TERM [SUPERORDINATE CATEGORY – PART OF SPEECH], [SUBSTITUTIONAL CATEGORIES], [SEMANTIC INFORMATION – CONSTRAINTS], [MORPHOLOGICAL INFORMATION – CONSTRAINTS – LIST OF INFLECTIONAL FORMS], [SYNTACTIC INFORMATION – CONSTRAINTS], [IDIOSYNCRATIC (CO)OCCURRENCES].

Properties of operators – being units relating terms to other terms or correlating "quanta" of information being conveyed by terms with the elements of a particular pragmatic setting – are to be described quite differently. As they function on each of the three levels of communicative grammar their specificity must be mirrored accordingly by the structure and by the content of an entry. Each of the entries should bring a "minigrammar" or a "microgrammar" governing the functioning of a particular operator on its appropriate level. This "minigrammar" should determine the effect of putting an operator into use, and the scope of its influence, along with its formal and semantic constraints. Operators of an ideational level are connectors – prepositions and conjunctions. On an interactional level, there are various operators of speech; on a discoursive or textual level, there are operators of discourse acts and operators of dialogization ("ritualizers" included). In the lexicon of communicative grammar, a list of grammatical operators is arranged for the sake of the standard effects of their communicative usage.

Again, roughly, the overall structure of an entry concerning properties of a particular operator can be illustrated as follows:

> $\text{OPERATOR}_{[IDEATIONAL]} \Rightarrow$ [FUNCTIONAL EFFECT(S)], [SCOPE(S) OF INFLUENCE], [FORMAL CONSTRAINTS], [SEMANTIC CONSTRAINTS]

After this necessarily compendious, and obviously too brief a presentation of the units of an ideational level of grammar, we now progress to the other two large groups of operators functioning on the interactional and textual level of the model.

Whereas the functioning of operators on the ideational level boils down to the modification of the meanings of terms, or the whole predicate-argument structures actualized in utterances, their basic function on the interactional level of grammar is the transformation of *utterances* into *act of speech*. It is by this means that communicating agents may establish a particular type of communicational relationship or adjust the concrete pragmatic parameters of their verbal interaction. Thus, an utterance considered against the backdrop of a particular act of speech is an instrument organizing social interaction by virtue of its pragmatic function – modal, emotive-evaluative, operational, and persuasive (the last being essentially a metafunction). Operators that

actualize those functions are chiefly analytic or analytic-synthetic constructions whose scope of influence usually involves the whole structure of an utterance or even larger fragments of text. As for the metafunction of persuasion, this is realized by operators that intensify the effects of particular acts of speech.

Overall, the structure of an entry concerning the properties of a particular operator located on this level can be rendered as follows:

OPERATOR$_{[INTERACTIONAL]}$ ⇒ [FUNCTIONAL EFFECT(S)], [SCOPE(S) OF INFLUENCE], [FORMAL CONSTRAINTS], [SEMANTIC CONSTRAINTS], [PRAGMATIC CONSTRAINTS].

Three groups of units operate on the textual level: ritualizers (customary verbal sequences being used for opening, sustaining, and closing chains of verbal interactions); metatextual markers arranging an information flow in a text by drawing interlocutors' attention to the manipulations being performed on particular fragments of a text (relating/binding pieces of information, setting forth ideas, amplifying a subject, explicating, summing up etc.); and "condensers" or "economizers" (operators that substantially reduce the number of significant elements of a text while concurrently maintaining its informativeness). All of them are basically autonomous, often polyfunctional lexical units, with a "microgrammar" of their own, which means that we currently still lack sound principles for the detailed description of their functioning.

6. Operational Aspects of the Model

Now, after this brief exposition of the interpretational means offered by the grammar, let us take a closer look at the operational aspect of the proposed structure.

First, close attention should be paid to the initial module of the proposed model – the paraphrasing module (or module of *intention*) – and, strictly speaking, to one of the most important domains of communication pertinent to this component – to the *communicational intention* of the speaker or to the recoverable-in-the-process-of-interpretation part of the speaker's "experiential thought" that is conveniently called "intended message".

Making this particular component a part of the grammar seems necessary in view of the fact that the grammar itself – being but an inventory of symbolic resources and not a device of any kind – is unable to produce utterances or texts. Regardless of the particular methodological perspective adopted in linguistic research, only the communicating agent can employ means from the repertory of symbolic resources in order to make his "intended message" known to the interlocutor, and to accomplish his own communicative purposes *via* the production of utterances and acts of speech. Accordingly, it is solely his partner, who, guided by the *Principle of Relevance* (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 158), is able to (re)construct the speaker's intention (to which, obviously, the addressee can not have direct access) by interpreting the meaning of the linguistic expressions used and inferencing their communicative value in a particular pragmatic setting.

The term *(re)construction* is deliberately put here in such a form as to draw attention to the fact that linguistic meaning is neither being *conveyed* nor *passed* on through a kind of communicative channel – unlike the normal way of talking about *conveying* or *passing on* a message in terms of the *Conduit Metaphor* (Reddy 1995: 164-201). It rather results from a kind of interpretational-negotiational activity (re)iteratively performed by the interlocutors involved in a communicative interaction. On the one hand, from the speaker's perspective, it emerges as a communicative phenomenon following his execution of communicative tasks by uttering sentences. On the other hand, from the perspective of the addressee, it appears as an outcome of his (re)constructional activity aimed at inferring the communicational value of the expressions used. Thus, when employed in a communicative environment, words usually function for the interlocutors as a medium or an operational tool for matching the standard meaning ascribed by the conventional symbolism of a language to the expressions used, and their communicative value is hypothesized by the addressee who commonly interprets them as the speaker's means of making his own "intended message" known to the other(s). As a consequence, also pertinent to this module are preverbal schemas or plans regarding the execution of communicative tasks. We call this "blend" a *communicative intention.*

When talking about this we have in mind at least three different communicative *modi operandi* of an utterance. These *modi* could conveniently be rendered as answers to key questions: 1) what is to be said (made known to the addressee); 2) what kind of a pragmatic/communicative goal is to be accomplished *by saying*, and what kind of a modal relationship between communicating agents is to be established *in saying*, something in a particular pragmatic setting; and 3) how should the particular utterance/text be constructed (genres of speech, stylistic patterns etc.) in order to accomplish a particular goal.

The first element of such a conceived intention is a particular mental, ideational image – a linguistically standardized conceptual structure representing that part of the speaker's experience which is to be "conveyed" or communicated via linguistic means.

The second aspect of the information with which the module of intention deals is the interactional aspect of the functioning of a particular utterance in the concrete act of communication. In other words, it handles those pragmatic and interactional variables that the speaker takes into account in order to accomplish his communicative goals via uttering the particularly shaped message.

The third aspect of a piece of information deals with formal, compositional, stylistic, and generic ("genre of speech") aspects of an utterance. All three of these aspects of intention may, of course, be studied separately, but in real communication they usually interact in a way that creates an enhanced combined effect – a synergy.

Another important clue governing the type of analysis that is being proposed here is the plain fact that texts or utterances as they are commonly used in real communication are mostly under-specified with respect to their illocutionary aspect and their communicative value. A message as it is produced online is seldom informationally complete by itself. What is explicitly being communicated and easy recoverable through the standard construal of the literal meaning of a message still requires context-sensi-

tive interpretation in order to be properly understood against the backdrop of a particular pragmatic setting. Usually this is accomplished by the interlocutors' generating deductive (or reductive) quasi-logical inferences, meant to rearrange or improve upon the overall representation of the world implied (its discoursive or indexical component included). This very process is being pragmatically constrained by the Principle of Relevance according to which the greater the cost of processing a particular linguistic means, the less its communicative relevance in a given pragmatic setting. Conversely, the greater the contextual effect of putting a particular linguistic means into use, the greater its communicative relevance in this context.

Thus, the standard, literal meaning of a sentence (or the "propositional form" of an utterance) is, for an interlocutor, merely a kind of a *stimulus* or a signal for the inferencing process to commence. In this process, the propositional form of an utterance is treated as the interpretation of a thought (attributed or desirable) of the speaker ,or as a representation of an actual (desirable) state of affairs. Speaking in general terms, a full-fledged interpretation is accomplished by the addressee's supplementation of the propositional form of the message with information being invoked from two main sources. The first is the standard systematic context to which the utterance or text directly or indirectly refers (this domain involves standard situational, discoursive, and indexical information). The second is the nonstandard context of the interlocutor's operational knowledge, i.e., a set of additional assumptions that, from the interpreter's point of view, should be taken as relevant to the proper understanding of the meaning of a message along with its communicative value and its pragmatic function. Thus, the information (message) embodied in an utterance may be conveniently represented in this formula:

$$M = C, S, I, \{F [(p) t, loc, asp]\}$$

wherein C stands for contextual information, S – for situational information, and I – for indexical information. By F we mean the function of interaction equal to the pragmatic intention of a speaker as made known by the utterance of a sentence in a particular pragmatic setting. This set of variables constitutes a background framework for a proposition (predicate-argument structure) which can further be actualized by expressions of time (t), localization (loc) and aspect (asp). Each of the symbols proposed in the formula represents a distinct informational domain from within which the element can be invoked in the process of deriving inferences pertaining to the meaning of an utterance.

Interpretation obtained through this process is usually contingent upon the knowledge constituting the basis from which inferences are derived. We consider this basis a kind of semantic representation – one which can be characterized as the symbolic, essentially propositional form that, in a given language, refers to a particular image schema (in the Lakoffian sense). These forms – which we have decided to call *semantic standards* because of the way they function in the process of drawing inferences – while generally similar to *defaults* in computer science (in the sense that a particular value for a variable is assigned automatically by an operating system and remains in

effect unless cancelled or overridden by the user), are actually parts of the system of representation of a particular linguistic image of the world. They consist of common, stereotypical knowledge, usually characterized by a kind of "folk quantification," e.g., *everyone knows (or believes) that p.* Any attempt to verbalize such units would yield trivial, "noninformative" utterances that would state common truths, obvious to every speaker of a particular language – the effect being the essential mark of every semantic standard. Therefore, utterances being the "unfoldings" of the predicative or propositional configurations that refer to semantic standards, are usually not used in real communication unless some educational activity is involved. The obvious reason for this is that they do not require any interpretative activity, and, as a result, cannot change the agents' structures of knowledge.

As has been stated before, any utterance, which by virtue of the Principle of Relevance leads to nontrivial consequences against the background of someone's operational knowledge, does that precisely because it lacks an informational completeness. It is exactly this factor which, in a particular pragmatic setting, triggers a process of generating inferences until they satisfy the interlocutor's requirements of comprehension. An informationally incomplete (in a particular pragmatic setting) utterance, which would therefore require context-sensitive interpretation, could only be one that did not verbalize (unfold) any semantic standard or default. Vice versa, any creative interpretation of utterances of this kind requires reference to the semantic standards against which a particular message could be interpreted as nontrivial.

7. Semantic Standards and Detrivialization – A Tutorial in Interpretation

Let us introduce a simple example. It will be confined to only such operations of detrivialization that can be executed on the basis of information being explicitly supplied on the textual level of the message itself. An elementary step (manipulation) allowing for nontrivial interpretation of an utterance is to specify at least one of the elements of the informational domains invoked in the previously introduced formula. Let us take a trivial utterance:

(1) *A doctor treats a patient.*

The utterance in question is semantically isomorphous to a standard predicate TREAT [DOCTOR, PATIENT]. In other words, it is a plain verbalization of a semantic standard to which the introduced predicate refers. The utterance can be interpreted as omnitemporal or as one that does not encourage placing the particular action in any temporal setting. The same holds for location and aspectual information. To transform this structure into nontrivial utterance it would suffice to specify any element pertinent to a background framing of the sentence or, while still remaining on a propositional level, to specify any of the potential arguments of a core predicate. If we would say:

(2) *A [famous] doctor treats a patient.*

this would entail senses like: a doctor is highly competent, or an illness itself is serious if not terminal, or a patient means something to him (or is equally famous), or a patient will certainly be cured, etc. All this could be inferred only by an interpreter who knows the standard according to which someone who is famous does not deal with man-in-the-street problems unless some unusual reasons are involved, and the standard – one who is famous, from a professional point of view is usually very good at what he/she does.

(3) *A doctor treats a patient [efficiently].*

This utterance could evoke a standard suspicion that regular treatment is usually inefficient or that some other consultant did not previously give a patient a chance to be cured. In fact, utterances like that can be "communicatively felicitous" solely against the background of the standards invoked.

(4) *A doctor treats [his] patient efficiently.*

This could properly be understood only if considered against the background of a standard, folk knowledge ⇒ [most doctors (as paradigmatic representatives of this money-hungry profession which is another common truth claimed to be known to everybody) treat unknown patients inefficiently – most likely to draw a maximal amount of money from their pockets.]

(5) *A doctor treats [his friend].*

This example implies that the person in question is treated in a special way. Yet this could be inferred only by one, who knows the standard describing (and, at the same time – *prescribing*) a typical demeanor towards friends => [we should treat our friends in the best of possible manners; they deserve it as persons who mean something to us].

(6) *A [consultant] treats a [movie star].*

This structure implies that he or she receives the best medical attention money can buy. Still, the implication is derivable only by previously invoking the standard of a movie star like [he/she is very rich] and a consultant [a consultant that is allowed to treat a movie star must be of highest rank], [consultants who treat movie stars usually charges flabbergasting rates for his/her services] and the like.

(7) *A [consultant] treats a patient.*

It calls for inferring a sense that the patient's disease is so serious, atypical or complicated that it cannot be dealt with by a general practitioner, or that a patient can afford special services, or he/she means something to the consultant. All these infer-

ences are contingent upon a standard [a consultant usually does not treat a patient unless he/she deserves (for whatever reason) special attention].

(8) *A doctor treats a/an [schizophrenic, epileptic, hemophiliac, rheumatic etc].*

In a case like this, conversely to the previous example, the inference is based upon a standard according to which patients with diseases that call for a special treatment should be assisted by doctors sufficiently qualified to deal with them, like e.g., consultants. Against the background of this standard, an interpretation of the utterance reads as follows: a patient is assisted by an "ordinary" doctor because he cannot afford a consultant, or the disease is not serious – or it could also be guessed that the expression "a doctor" in the utterance actually refers to a consultant.

Similar effects could be obtained by specifying any element of the temporal, locative or aspectual domain.

A very powerful means of detrivialization is the disturbance of the ordering of arguments within a particular standard. This can be observed in sentences like these:

(9) *A patient treats a doctor.*
A child beats his mother.
An alcoholic drinks mineral water.

The possibility of communicatively "felicitous" interpretations of sentences of this type is a consequence of the very existence of particular semantic standards in the linguistic image of the world against the background of which nontrivial inferences can be derived. These are so obvious that we will not dwell upon them here.

Now, let us take another example – one in which an utterance contains a nontrivial predicate complex, nonisomorphous to any semantic standard. In such cases a predicate does not verbalize standard information:

(10) *A doctor beats a patient.*

Here we have a blending of two mutually independent semantic standards:

FS (XA): BEAT [perpetrator, victim] & S (XA): TREAT [doctor, patient].

The first structure specification of its standard arguments – that is, a perpetrator and a victim – allows for verbalizations such as:

(11) *A hoodlum beats a passer-by.*
A criminal beats an old man.

After inserting the term [doctor] in the position of the perpetrator, we obtain a metaphorical reference that could be rendered as follows:

IMP ⇒ [A doctor beats a patient instead of treating him],
[A doctor, who beats a patient, acts like (or turns into) a hoodlum, criminal, etc.]

In such instances, we also have a contrast of values assigned to the standards used, because the predicate TREAT bears a standard positive value whereas BEAT, construed in a standard way, is evaluated negatively. This disparity itself evokes explicit moral judgement.

These quite simple principles of understanding show the prerequisites of the communicative grammar as a tool of interpretation. Naturally, we are aware that such rules of interpretation are of a more complicated nature and should be described more precisely for practical purposes. At present, we are simply illustrating our interpretative approach via an example of informational analysis of a real fragment of text.

(12) *One beautiful evening John joyfully went home because Mary with a bashful smile had at last answered his tormenting question.*

The substance of this utterance is represented by two main predicates which are connected by a causal relationship. This relationship is expressed with the syntactical operator [BECAUSE]. It indicates the predominant place of the causal predicate:

(13) ANSWER [MARY, QUESTION] ⇒ GO [JOHN, HOME]

One easily notices that this formal configuration has nothing to do with the proper informational perspective which is connected rather with the secondary predicate expressed by the non-isomorphic communicative unit [JOYFULLY]. The non-isomorphic character of this unit is proved by the fact that it does not modify the meaning of the verb [GO] and in the informative sense creates the timely parallel predicate:

(14) (TO BE) JOYFUL [JOHN]

which leads to the proper result of the expressed causality. In other words, this causal relationship can only carry any sense if we formulate it timely in the following way:

(15) (-t2) ANSWER [MARY, QUESTION] ⇒ (-t1) (TO BE) JOYFUL (JOHN) ∧ GO [JOHN, HOME]

This fundamental informational base was diversely extended. First of all, time actualizers [ONE EVENING] were applied. The application of time indicators is not obligatory and this operation is one of the possible instruments of detrivialization of an utterance. The grammatical forms of the past [WENT, HAD ANSWERED] more strictly indicate the time of [GO, ANSWER]. We can judge the sequence of events with the help of a standard semantic script of a question answered in a love situation. Typically, all time information is of an external character.

Secondary predicates also create another element of extension. Two of them, SMILE [MARY] ∧ SHY [MARY], are connected with the sense of the main predicate, ANSWER [MARY, QUESTION]. The secondary metaphorical predicate, TORMENT [QUESTION, JOHN], is probably concerned with the period of time when John was expecting an answer. The last two informational units, BEAUTIFUL [EVENING] and AT LAST [ANSWER], do not belong, in our opinion, to the ideational level of the language. They express the speaker's evaluation being made on an interactional level, and cannot be compared directly with the proper ideational information.

This surface analysis allows us to formulate the following informational script:

(16) (t-4) PUT [JOHN, QUESTION] ⇒
(t-3) WAIT [JOHN, (FOR THE) ANSWER]
TORMENT [QUESTION, JOHN] ⇒ (t-2) ANSWER [MARY, QUESTION]
∧ SHY [MARY] ∧ SMILE [MARY] ⇒ (t-1) (TO BE) JOYFUL [JOHN]
∧ GO [JOHN, HOME]

A subsequent, deep analysis of the text, should be concerned with the description of all the semantic standards involved in such an investigation. For example, we have neither explicit information about the content of the question, nor the answer in the text. A standard interpretation compels us to accept the prototypical standard (QUESTION) JOHN: DO YOU LOVE ME? ⇒ (ANSWER) MARY: YES, I DO, which we can select from quite numerous scripts about love and its behavioral models. All semantic operations on this level of analysis are very difficult to formulate and describe. Fortunately, these operations are not the subject of the present paper. But without such research we could not build a complete model of people's understandings of texts and utterances.

8. Outro

Thus, elements of the semantic standards of the type we have just discussed are a part of a basic component of communicative grammar. They constitute an important piece of semantic information ascribed to the units operating on the ideational level of grammar. And they, at the same time, function as an inferential basis for agents' interpretive activity in concrete acts of communication.

Inevitably, an account of this activity should involve delineating standard, trivial cognitive configurations constituting a basis for subsequent operations of deriving grammatical form and meaning. However, in view of the uniqueness of every communicative intention (or intended message), along with the fact that linguistically encoded information is not "conveyed" in the act of communication on the level of general knowledge, but rather on the operational and indexical one, a rigorous accounting of this phenomenon would seem to be extremely difficult. Nevertheless, what can and should be done, even at this stage of research, is to concentrate on modeling the interpretive part of the grammar, starting from trivial text/utterance-sense, and to reduce the modeling of the productive aspect of communication to the level of the verbaliza-

tion of semantic standards most important for a particular linguistic image of the world. As a result, we would obviously obtain semantically correct, although quite trivial and non-informative, utterances, lacking any communicative value. However, having them, having a kind of a map of semantic standards vital to successful communication in a particular language, we would be able to compare those structures with their informative, nontrivial counterparts as they appear in real communication. Therefore, we could possibly discern and study in detail successive stages in the process of inferring nontrivial (and nonstandard) senses by employing standard interpretive means in a particular pragmatic setting.

Summary

The article presents the basic tenets of *Communicative Grammar* – a new methodological framework which proposes a holistic approach to language studies. In this approach, the cognitive and functional (pragmatic) constraints on processing linguistically standardized information are considered to be the main factors affecting the organization of a grammar. The informational units, the principles of their combining, and the communicative results of this combining are the principal goals of the *Communicative Grammar* description. The grammar consists of three modules or components which correspond to the three aspects of a human verbalizing potential – *intention*, *interpretation* and *production* – and which operate on three levels – *ideational*, *interactional* and *textual*. The authors of this concept hope that the proposed methodology will make various applications possible in those areas where models of an agent's linguistic activity are involved.

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